



PRESS RELEASE

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YUMA MOTEL OWNERS PLEAD GUILTY TO CONSPIRACY TO HARBOR ALIENS

PHOENIX -- The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on September 27, 2004, Bharatkuma Jivabhai Patel, DOB 6/1/65 and his wife, Vinaben M. Patel, DOB 6/1/64, of Yuma, Ariz., pleaded guilty to Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens in federal district court in Phoenix. As part of the plea agreement, the Patels agree to forfeit \$100,000. Both defendants admitted in their pleas that they harbored illegal aliens at their place of business, RegaLodge Motel in Yuma, Ariz. They also admitted that in order to prevent the aliens from leaving the motel, a locking device was placed on the inside doorknob of the motel room. The Patels were paid for their role in the harboring conspiracy.

The Patels, pleaded to the indictment which charged them with violating Title 8, U.S. Code, Sections 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii), (v)(I), and (v)(II), Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens and Aiding and Abetting the Conspiracy.

A conviction for Conspiracy to Harbor carries a maximum penalty of 10 years, a \$250,000 fine or both. Sentencing is set before Judge Neil V. Wake on January 17, 2005.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The prosecution is being handled by Lisa Jennis Settel, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-763-PHX-NVW
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